

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 IO-13 EB-07 AID-05 OMB-01 ACDA-07 CCO-00  
/089 W

-----281132Z 112743 /14

P 280951Z MAY 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8264

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ACCRA 4050

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT PINS PGOV GH  
SUBJ: GHANIAN POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: A STATE 122079 B EUCOM INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY  
CABLE 100-77 C DIA DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE NOTICE  
DIN-144-6A

1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN GHANA:  
--WE BELIEVE THAT THE ACHEAMPONG REGIME IS LIVING  
ON BORROWED TIME AND IS LIKELY TO BE REPLACED IN NEAR  
FUTURE. REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH REGIME'S  
PERFORMANCE INCLUDE: WIDESPREAD AND INCREASING CORRUPTION  
AMONG TOP MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICIALS; A SPIRALING  
INFLATION RATE (ESTIMATED AT NEAR 100 PERCENT PER YEAR);  
ACUTE SHORTAGES OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE, TRANSPORTATION  
EQUIPMENT AND SPARE PARTS; DETERIORATION OF MORALE IN  
THE ARMED FORCES BECAUSE OF CIVILIAN OPPOSITION TO  
CONTINUED MILITARY RULE; AND WIDESPREAD FOOD SHORTAGES  
NOT ONLY IN NORTHERN AND UPPER REGIONS OF COUNTRY BUT IN  
URBAN AREAS AS WELL. HIGH PRICES AND LIMITED AVAIL-  
ABILITY OF FOOD WERE ONE OF MAIN REASONS UNDERLYING  
STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, TO WHICH GOVERNMENT RESPONDED,  
HEAVY HANDEDLY, BY CLOSING COUNTRY'S THREE UNIVERSITIES.

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ACHEAMPONG HAS STEADFASTLY REFUSED EVEN TO CONSIDER  
SERIOUSLY VARIOUS ECONOMIC STABILIZATION MOVES  
RECOMMENDED BY IMF, IBRD, AND AID DONORS INCLUDING  
US. IN SUMMARY, ACHEAMPONG PERSONALLY AND THE SUPREME  
MILITARY COUNCIL(SMC) COLLECTIVELY ARE INCREASINGLY  
SEEN BY GHANA'S ELITE AND CITIZENS AS INCOMPETENT AND/OR  
AS RUNNING THE COUNTRY INTO THE GROUND TO LINE THEIR

OWN POCKETS. GIVEN THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS AND LEVEL OF PRESENT DISCONTENT, WE BELIEVE, AS DO MANY GHANIANS AND MOST INFORMED MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS, THAT THIS REGIME IS ON THE WAY OUT.

2. HAVING SAID THIS, WE WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE SITUATION IN GHANA REMAINS OUTWARDLY CALM AND LACKS ANY PALPABLE SENSE THAT A SUCCESSFUL COUP OR VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS ARE IMMINENT. WHILE EITHER COULD CONCEIVABLY HAPPEN WITHOUT MUCH ADVANCE WARNING, OUR PRESENT ESTIMATE IS THAT A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO COME IN A MATTER OF WEEKS OR MONTHS RATHER THAN DAYS. IT MUST BE KEPT IN MIND, TOO, THAT GHANIANS POSSESS A REMARKABLE AMOUNT OF PATIENCE AND A WILLINGNESS TO TOLERATE CONDITIONS WHICH OTHERS MIGHT FIND UNBEARABLE. SINCE POLITICAL EXPECTATIONS ARE NOT HIGH HERE, THERE IS LITTLE CONFIDENCE THAT A POST-ACHEAMPONG GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE VASTLY GREATER SUCCESS DEALING WITH THE COUNTRY'S SEEMINGLY INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS. WE THEREFORE CANNOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY THAT OUR FORECASTS OF THE DEATH OF THIS REGIME WILL TURN OUT TO BE PREMATURE. ACHEAMPONG IS TOUGH AND SHREWD. HE HAS SURVIVED FOR MORE THAN FIVE YEARS, CONFOUNDING MANY OBSERVERS, AND WHILE WE THINK HE HAS HAD IT THIS TIME, WE MIGHT BE WRONG. IN ANY CASE, PRESENT SITUATION HERE MERITS ATTENTION BUT NOT ALARM.

3. MOST LIKELY SCENARIOS IF CHANGES OCCUR:

A. WE THINK IT MOST LIKELY ACHEAMPONG WILL BE

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REMOVED EITHER BY SOME TYPE OF PALACE COUP OR BY DISGRUNTLED MILITARY OFFICERS WITH CIVILIAN SUPPORT. AN ABORTIVE COUP ATTEMPT ON MAY 21, COUPLED WITH OTHER REPORTS OF COUP PLOTTING, POINTS IN THIS DIRECTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, ACHEAMPONG IS NOT BLIND TO THIS DANGER AND HAS A NUMBER OF KEY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS UNDER SURVEILLANCE. HIS SECURITY SERVICES ARE FAIRLY COMPETENT AND IT MAY PROVE HARD TO GET THE DROP ON HIM. TASSUMING, HOWEVER, THAT A SUCCESSFUL COUP TAKES PLACE, THE ODDS ARE GOOD THAT THE NEW MILITARY LEADERS WOULD ASSURE GHANIANS THEY INTENDED TO HOLD POWER ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO TURN OVER RULE TO CIVILIANS AND THEN GO BACK TO BARRACKS. AS A TOKEN OF GOOD FAITH, A NUMBER OF CIVILIANS WOULD PROBABLY BE APPOINTED TO HEAD VARIOUS MINISTRIES. THE MILITARY, HOWEVER, INITIALLY WOULD RETAIN CONTROL OF LEVERS OF REAL POWER. HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE NEW REGIME TO TRANSFER POWER TO CIVILIANS AND HOW THIS WOULD BE DONE ARE OPEN QUESTIONS. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE, BUT UNLIKELY, THAT MILITARY MIGHT POSTPONE

INDEFINATELY A FULL RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE. IN ANY CASE, IN THIS SCENARIO WE DOUBT THAT ANY AMERICANS WOULD BE IN SERIOUS DANGER SINCE COUP WOULD PROBABLY OCCUR IN PRE-DAWN HOURS WITHOUT WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE.

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B. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT ACHEAMPONG, IN AN EFFORT TO BUY TIME AND DIFFUSE HOSTILITY, MIGHT DECLARE THAT "UNION GOVERNMENT" EXISTS AND THEN APPOINT COVILIANS TO HEAD SOME ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES. IN ADDITION, ROVING AMBASSADORS AND SPECIAL ADVISER TO ACHEAMPONG JOE APPIAH MIGHT WELL BE NAMED PRIME MINISTER, WITH ACHEAMPONG HIMSELF CLOAKED IN THE PRESIDENCY. THIS MOVE WOULD PROBABLY, THOUGH NOT CERTAINLY, KEEP ACHEAMPONG IN THE SADDLE FOR A FEW MORE MONTHS. HOWEVER, CORRUPTION, ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND ACHEAMPONG'S INEPT MEDDLING WOULD REMAIN. MOREOVER, THERE IS NO POPULAR SUPPORT FOR CONCEPT OF UNION GOVERNMENT, DESPITE AN INTENSIVE EFFORT BY ACHEAMPONG AND APPIAH. THE MILITARY IS ALSO HOSTILE TO APPIAH AND MIGHT NOT WANT HIM AS PRIME MINISTER. THUS IN THIS SCENARIO THE POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE INSTABILITY IS STILL VERY LARGE, THOUGH IN THE SHORT RUN A TEMPORARY CALM MIGHT PREVAIL.

C. ANOTHER SCEANRIO IS THAT ACHEAMPONG MIGHT RESORT TO MORE REPRESSIVE MEASURES TO KEEP STUDENTS AND OTHER DISSIDENTS IN LINE, SHOULD DISTURBANCES OCCUR. IN THIS CASE, SUCH MEASURES WOULD SPARK EVEN MORE RESISTENCE.

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D. LESS LIKELY IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT ACHEAMPONG WILL RESIGN OR FLEE. HE IS STUBBORNLY HOLDING ON TO POWER AND REJECTING ANY SUGGESTIONS WHICH TEND TO DIMINISH HIS AUTHORITY. WHILE HE MIGHT, IN THE END, PREFER A COMFORTABLE RETIREMENT ABROAD TO A BULLET IN THE HEAD, WE THINK HE WILL STAND HIS GROUND RATHER THAN RUN. DESPITE THIS INTRANSIGENCE, THE SMC MIGHT DISINTEGRATE, WITH MEMBERS, FEARFUL FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY, TUNING OUT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL PROCESS OR THEMSELVES FLEEING TO OTHER COUNTRIES. THIS WOULD OF COURSE LEAVE ACHEAMPONG IN SUCH A VULNERABLE POSITION THAT HIS OWN FALL WOULD BE INEVITABLE.

E. LEAST LIKELY SCENARIO, IN OUR VIEW, IS THAT NOTHING WILL HAPPEN--ACHEAMPONG AND SMC WILL CONTINUE AS BEFORE, STUDENTS AND OTHER DISSIDENTS WILL BEHAVE THEMSELVES, CITIZENS WILL TOLERATE EVEN HIGHER FOOD PRICES, AND STARVATION IN THE NORTH WILL NOT DISTURB THE RELATIVELY GOOD LIFE BY THE MILITARY. OUR GUESS IS THAT ACHEAMPONG HIMSELF THINKS THIS IS THE WAY THINGS WILL WORK OUT, PERHAPS WITH THE PROVISIO THAT US AND OTHER FOOD AID WILL PREVENT MASS STARVATION AND GET HIM OFF THE HOOK ON THIS CHARGE. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE HE IS OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY (IN A POLITICAL, NOT CLINICAL SENSE) AND THAT SUCH A "HAPPY" ENDING IS UNLIKELY.

4. WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON REFS B AND C:

A. INFLATION RATE IS NEAR 100 PERCENT (NOT 200 PER CENT)

B. ALTHOUGH IMPORTS IN THE PIPELINE ARE STILL COMING INTO COUNTRY AND SHOULD CONTINUE NEAR PRESENT LEVELS AT LEAST UNTIL AUGUST, THERE IS A SERIOUS FOREIGN EXCHANGE SHORTAGE, AND GHANA'S CREDIT IS NEARING EXHAUSTION.

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C. OPPOSITION TO ACHEAMPONG COMES NOT ONLY FROM STUDENTS BUT ALSO FROM THE POPULACE--EVEN ELEMENTS OF THE POLICE--WHICH DISLIKES HIS INCOMPETENCE AND CORRUPTION. HOWEVER, TRADITIONAL TRIBAL LEADERS HAVE GENERALLY SUPPORTED ACHEAMPONG AND THE SMC IN PUBLIC. THE ASANTEHENE HAS REPORTEDLY ADVISED ACHEAMPONG

PRIVATELY TO MOVE TOWARDS CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT BUT HAS  
NOT ATTACKED HIM PUBLICLY.

D. AS POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS TO ACHEAMPONG, BOTH  
AKUFFO AND BUSIA ARE UNLIKELY CHOICES, THE FORMER  
BECAUSE HE IS TOO CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH  
ACHEAMPONG AND THE LATTER BECAUSE HE IS ILL AND HIS  
REGIME RAN THE COUNTRY INEPTLY AND CORRUPTLY.  
(HOWEVER, MANY BUSIA SUPPORTERS ARE OPPOSED TO  
ACHEAMPONG AND SEE THEMSELVES AS LOGICAL CHOICES  
FOR SENIOR POSITIONS IN A NEW REGIME).  
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## Message Attributes

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